THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Science Talent Search at class XII level was discontinued in 1977. The examination was extended to Social Science subject also taught at Class X and renamed as National Talent Search Scheme.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Introduction of Palmistry

210. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any decision to introduce Palmistry as a subject for studies in schools and colleges in the year 2004-05;

(b) whether there were other such subjects void of scientific logic as were proposed for inclusion in the courses of studies in schools and colleges in the year 2003-2004;

(c) whether the State Government have taken any steps in this regard; and

(d) the present status of such moves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Admissions under handicapped quota

†211. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the mentally retarded students are not getting admissions in the universities under the reservation for handicapped quota;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether mentally retarded children do require higher education; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard and the future plans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) According to the information given by the University Grants Commission (UGC) no complaint in this regard has been received by the UGC from any University/Institute.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) UGC has already issued a circular to all the universities for implementing the provisions regarding 3% reservation in admissions in all Government educational institutions and other educational institutions receiving aid from the Government as contained in Section 39 of the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995.

Abandonment of force to discipline Children

212. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a recent recommendation of the State Human Rights Commission to the Tamil Nadu Government to retain corporal punishment in the statute to discipline erring students in schools; and

(b) if so, the details of the steps taken/being taken to review the existing laws and practices being followed in the different States to protect rights of the children in society, in view of the 1989 United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, ratified by India, which advocates abandonment of force as a mean of disciplining children in favour of non-violent methods of coercision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The State Human Rights Commission of Tamil Nadu has informed that issue of corporal punishment to the school students was discussed in a meeting held in consultation with School Education Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu and it was recommended to the Government of Tamil Nadu to evolve a proper approach based on the recommendation of the